

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 14114

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: ANDREOTTI'S CONCERN ABOUT THE U.S. PRESS COVERAGE OF
HIS GOVERNMENT AND THE DC GENERALLY

1. ON TWO OCCASIONS RECENTLY WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY PERSONS
IN DIRECT TOUCH WITH ANDREOTTI THAT HE IS PREOCCUPIED
BY THE BAD PRESS IN AMERICA AND ELSEWHERE WHICH HAS BEEN
RECEIVED BY THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND THE GOI.
AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, ANDREOTTI IS EVEN CONSIDERING
HIRING AN AMERICAN PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM TO IMPROVE THE
DC IMAGE.

2. ANDREOTTI HAS SELECTED AS HIS DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR
UMBERTO LAROCCA, WHO IS CURRENTLY VICE DIRECTOR GENERAL
FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. LAROCCA
IS A CAPABLE ITALIAN DIPLOMAT WHO KNOWS THE UNITED STATES
WELL AND IS FRIENDLY. WE HAVE SUGGESTED TO LAROCCA THAT
HE SHOULD ENLARGE THE SCOPE OF HIS NEW JOB WHICH
TRADITIONALLY HAS BEEN THAT OF CONTACT FOR THE PRIME
MINISTER'S OFFICE WITH THE DIPLOMATIC SORPS, TO INCLUDE
THE POSITION OF CONTACT FOR THE FOREIGN PRESS OR AT LEAST
AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS. LAROCCA HAS INDICATED A
WILLINGNESS, AND WE PLAN A LUNCHEON IN EARLY SEPTEMBER
TO INTRODUCE HIM TO THE RESIDENT AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS.
IF WE ARE SUCCESSFUL, WE HOPE LAROCCA CAN ARRANGE TO
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MAKE ANDREOTTI AVAILABLE TO THE U.S. PRESS AND, PERHAPS,

ARRANGE INTERVIEWS WITH OTHER LEADING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS.

3. THIS CONCERN FOR THE DC PUBLIC IMAGE ABROAD, ALBEIT BELATED, IS MOST WELCOME. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, WE HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR MONTHS TO TRY TO CONVINCE THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS OF THE NEED TO PROJECT A MORE POSITIVE AND EFFICIENT IMAGE, NOT ONLY WITHIN ITALY, BUT ALSO WITH THE FOREIGN JOURNALISTS STATIONED HERE. THE RESPONSE IS USUALLY AGREEMENT WITH THE ARGUMENT BUT NO ACTION HAS RESULTED. NOT ONLY IS THERE NO MECHANISM IN THE DC PARTY APPARATUS TO SERVICE PRESS QUERIES BUT THE TOP DC LEADERS HAVE REFUSED TO MEET WITH SENIOR AMERICAN JOURNALISTS WHO HAVE COME TO ITALY TO LEARN ABOUT THE LOCAL SCENE. ONE RESULT OF THIS ALOOF INDIFFERENCE HAS BEEN A DISTINCT CONCENTRATION BY THE U.S. PRESS ON THE COMMUNIST PARTY WHOSE SECRETARY, BERLINGUER, IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE TO U.S. CORRESPONDENTS. HOPEFULLY, ANDREOTTI CAN PUSH THE DC TO A MORE EFFECTIVE PUBLIC INFORMATION EFFORT.BEAUDRY

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